- Proton Bernstein instability
- in the magnetosphere:
- Linear dispersion theory
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- 5 Abstract. Kinetic linear dispersion theory for electromagnetic fluctua-
- 6 tions in a homogeneous collisionless plasma is used to study the properties
- of a proton Bernstein mode instability driven by a proton velocity distribu-
- tion $f_p(\mathbf{v})$ such that $\partial f_p(v_\perp)/\partial v_\perp > 0$ at suprathermal values of v_\perp where
- $_{9}$ || and \perp denote directions parallel and perpendicular to the background mag-
- netic field \mathbf{B}_o , respectively. The model uses a three-component proton ve-
- locity distribution with $f_p(\mathbf{v}) = f_1(v) + f_2(v_{||}, v_{\perp}) f_3(v_{||}, v_{\perp})$ where $f_1(v)$
- represents a Maxwellian thermal component. Here f_2 and f_3 are bi-Maxwellians
- with $T_{\perp p} > T_{\parallel p}$ and slightly different densities and temperatures to repre-
- sent a suprathermal velocity ring component consistent with nonthermal pro-
- ton perpendicular velocity distributions observed in the magnetospheric ring
- current. As is well established, the growth rate of the resulting instability
- has relative maxima at harmonics of the proton cyclotron frequency, the wavevec-
- tor ${f k}$ satisfies $0 < k_{\parallel} < k_{\perp}$ and wavelengths are of the order of or
- smaller than the proton gyroradius. The instability growth rate decreases
- as the electron/thermal-proton temperature ratio increases and, for the di-
- 21 mensionless parameters chosen here, has a maximum value for the thermal
- proton β of about 10%.

1. Introduction

Enhanced magnetic and electric field fluctuations at frequencies between the proton 23 cyclotron frequency and the lower hybrid frequency and at propagation nearly perpendicular to \mathbf{B}_o are observed frequently near the equatorial plane of the terrestrial magnetosphere. Such enhanced fluctuations were first called "equatorial noise" [Russell et al., 1970; Santolík et al., 2002, 2004], but more recently have been termed "magnetosonic waves" [Perraut et al., 1982; Pokhotelov et al., 2008]. Horne et al. [2007] suggested that these enhanced fluctuations may accelerate electrons from tens of keV up to a few MeV in the outer radiation belt. This has stimulated substantial recent interest in these fluctuations [Meredith et al., 2008, 2009; Tao et al., 2009; Shprits, 2009; Ni and Summers, 2010; Bortnik and Thorne, 2010]. Magnetospheric observations characterize the 32 unstable proton velocity distributions $f_p(\mathbf{v})$ associated with these "magnetosonic waves" as having a velocity-ring type property or, more generally, with $\partial f_p(v_\perp)/\partial v_\perp > 0$ where \perp denotes directions perpendicular to the background magnetic field ${f B}_o$ [Perraut et al., 1982; Boardsen et al., 1992; Meredith et al., 2008; Borovsky and Denton, 2009; Denton et al., 2010. Such unstable proton velocity distributions have also been obtained from the 37 RAM magnetospheric model [Jordanova et al., 1997]. Chen et al. [2010] used the RAM model to show that, as a result of injection during magnetic storms, proton velocity distributions $f_p(\mathbf{v})$ near midnight are essentially bi-Maxwellian with $T_{\perp}/T_{\parallel} > 1$, where the subscripts indicate directions relative to the background magnetic field \mathbf{B}_o . But between prenoon and duskside, energy-dependent ion convection leads to a velocity-ring distributions with the property $\partial f_p(v_\perp)/\partial v_\perp > 0$ at suprathermal perpendicular velocities. Chen

et al. [2011] analyzed energetic proton measurements from geosynchronous orbit during
the April 2001 magnetic storm to show that proton velocity rings can form over a broad
spatial region from noon to pre-midnight. Furthermore, these authors used the approximate linear theory of *Chen et al.* [2010] and the observed proton velocity distributions to
calculate convective growth rates of the resulting instability.

If the positive slope of $f_p(v_{\perp})$ is sufficiently steep, kinetic linear dispersion theory in 49 a relatively homogeneous, collisionless, magnetized plasma predicts that electromagnetic proton Bernstein modes at $0 < k_{\parallel} << k_{\perp}$ become unstable at harmonics of the proton 51 cyclotron frequency. Perraut et al. [1982] considered a cold plasma with a cold proton velocity ring to show that, at $k_{\parallel} = 0$, a proton-driven instability would be excited near 53 crossings between the magnetosonic/whistler wave and the various Bernstein mode harmonics. In this cold plasma approximation, the two critical parameters are the relative density of the ring and the relative ring speed. The growth rate becomes stronger for 56 increasing ion ring densities, and, for the relatively weak ring components typical to the magnetosphere, the instability is excited only when the perpendicular ring speed is larger 58 than the Alfvén speed. Further studies considered thermal electron and ion components Boardsen et al., 1992; McClements and Dendy, 1993; Horne et al., 2000]; for exam-60 ple, McClements et al. [1994] showed that thermal effects allow the cyclotron harmonic instability to grow at propagation angles out to at least 10° from directions strictly per-62 pendicular to \mathbf{B}_{a} . Akimoto et al. [1985] showed that the growth rate is quite sensitive to 63 the electron temperature and decreases with increasing T_e/T_p .

Some particle-in-cell simulations have addressed the nonlinear consequences of this instability in the electrostatic limit [e.g., Lee and Birdsall, 1979; Roth and Hudson, 1985;

Janhunen et al., 2003; Ashour-Abdalla et al., 2006]. But few simulations have addressed the fully electromagnetic properties of this instability [Lee and Birdsall, 1979] in the nonzero- β regime appropriate for the terrestrial magnetosphere. Recently Liu et al. [2011] 69 have carried out fully electromagnetic particle-in-cell simulations of the proton Berstein instability. The simulation results agree well with a kinetic linear dispersion analysis and demonstrate that proton scattering by the enhanced fluctuations is a prime cause for the 72 reduction of the $\partial f_p(v_\perp)/\partial v_\perp > 0$ and the consequent saturation of instability growth. Here we solve the full kinetic linear dispersion equation for the proton Bernstein insta-74 bility driven by $\partial f_p(v_\perp)/\partial v_\perp > 0$ at suprathermal speeds in a homogeneous, collisionless, magnetized plasma. We derive scaling relations for the growth rate of this instability as 76 function of the thermal proton β and the electron/thermal-proton temperature ratio. The term "magnetosonic waves" has been incorrectly applied to fluctuations observed 78 in the magnetosphere. In magnetohydrodynamic (MHD) theory, magnetosonic waves correspond to the normal mode which, at propagation oblique to the background magnetic field, is compressive and has a phase speed faster than the incompressible Alfven mode. 81 Because MHD theory is limited to frequencies much below the proton cyclotron frequency, magnetosonic waves have historically been associated with such very low frequencies. Un-83 fortunately, many observers have applied the "magnetosonic" label to their measurements of compressional modes above the proton cyclotron frequency. We will bow to precedent 85 and use this incorrect term in referring to magnetospheric observations. But we insist on using the more appropriate term "proton Bernstein mode instability" (omitting "mode" for the sake of brevity) in describing linear theory calculations of the growing fluctuations studied here.

We denote the jth species plasma frequency as $\omega_j \equiv \sqrt{4\pi n_o e^2/m_j}$, the jth species cyclotron frequency as $\Omega_j \equiv e_j B_o/m_j c$, the jth component thermal speed as $v_j \equiv \sqrt{k_B T_{\parallel j}/m_j}$, and $\tilde{\beta}_j \equiv 8\pi n_o k_B T_j/B_o^2$. The Alfvén speed is $v_A \equiv B_o/\sqrt{4\pi n_o m_i}$. Here n_o is the total plasma density, \mathbf{B}_o denotes the uniform background magnetic field, and we consider a two-species plasma of electrons (subscript e) and protons (subscript p). The complex frequency $\omega = \omega_r + i\gamma$ where $\gamma > 0$ indicates a growing fluctuation. We define the magnetic compressibility as

$$C_{\parallel} \equiv \frac{|\delta B_{\parallel}|^2}{|\delta \mathbf{B}|^2} \tag{1}$$

[Gary et al., 2010] and the electric/magnetic field energy ratio as

$$\sigma_{EE} \equiv \frac{|\delta \mathbf{E}|^2}{|\delta \mathbf{B}|^2} \tag{2}$$

⁹⁰ [Gary, 1993, Eq. (5.2.5)].

Although the subscript \bot generally indicates a direction perpendicular to \mathbf{B}_o , we warn
the reader that it is applied in two different contexts here. We use v_\bot in the usual sense,
that is, to denote the magnitude of the perpendicular velocity in cylindrical coordinates.

However, for vector quantities associated with spatial variations, including \mathbf{k} , $\delta \mathbf{B}$, and $\delta \mathbf{E}$,
we use \bot to denote one of the two perpendicular coordinates. The Cartesian coordinate
system of our linear dispersion theory [Gary, 1993] admits spatial variations in both the
direction parallel to \mathbf{B}_o (denoted by \parallel) and one direction perpendicular to the background
field (denoted by \bot), but no spatial variations in the other perpendicular direction (denoted by $\bot \bot$). So the real wavevector is defined as $\mathbf{k} \equiv \hat{\mathbf{z}}k_{\parallel} + \hat{\mathbf{y}}k_{\perp} = \hat{\mathbf{z}}k\cos\theta + \hat{\mathbf{y}}k\sin\theta$ where θ denotes the wavevector direction relative to \mathbf{B}_o .

2. Linear Theory

This section describes our numerical solutions for the properties of the proton Bernstein 101 instability driven by $\partial f_p(v_\perp)/\partial v_\perp > 0$ at suprathermal perpendicular speeds using the 102 linear dispersion equation for electromagnetic fluctuations in a homogeneous, magnetized, 103 collisionless plasma. Under the assumption that the plasma species velocity distributions 104 can be represented as the sum of several Maxwellians or bi-Maxwellians, the analytic 105 form for this dispersion equation is given, for example, by Stix [1992] and Gary [1993]. In contrast to several of the approximate linear theory analyses cited above, we here, as 107 Denton et al. [2010] and Gary et al. [2010], numerically solve the full dispersion equation for thermal proton and electron velocity distributions for arbitrary angles of propagation 109 relative to \mathbf{B}_o .

Denton et al. [2010] and Gary et al. [2010] examined linear theory solutions for proton velocity distributions as observed in the plasma sheet boundary layer. Such distributions have positive slopes in v_{\perp} at speeds relatively small compared to the overall proton thermal speed, and may be represented as the difference of two Maxwellians. In contrast here our concern is instability growth in the magnetospheric ring current, where both observations [Perraut et al., 1982; Boardsen et al., 1992; Meredith et al., 2008; Borovsky and Denton, 2009; Chen et al., 2011] and ring current models [Chen et al., 2010] show that stormtime proton velocity distributions may consist of a relatively cool, relatively dense, relatively isotropic thermal component and a relatively hot, relatively tenuous, velocity-ring-like part. In this case the regime of $\partial f_p(v_{\perp})/\partial v_{\perp} > 0$ arises at v_{\perp} values greater than the average speed of the thermal component. To represent such a case, we here consider

proton velocity distributions constructed from three components in the form

$$f_p(\mathbf{v}) = f_1(v) + f_2(v_{\parallel}, v_{\perp}) - f_3(v_{\parallel}, v_{\perp})$$

where each component is a bi-Maxwellian with

$$f_j(v_{\parallel}, v_{\perp}) = \frac{n_j}{(2\pi v_j^2)^{3/2}} \frac{T_{\parallel j}}{T_{\perp j}} \exp(-v_{\parallel}^2/2v_j^2) \exp(-v_{\perp}^2 T_{\parallel j}/2v_j^2 T_{\perp j})$$

Here f_1 is the thermal proton component represented by an isotropic Maxwellian distribution with $T_{\parallel 1} = T_{\perp 1}$. Thus, using the definitions of Section 1, $v_1^2/v_A^2 = \tilde{\beta}_1/2$. The two 112 other components are hotter and anisotropic with $T_{\perp j}/T_{\parallel j}>1$ so that their difference represents a velocity-ring-like distribution with positive slope in the perpendicular veloc-114 ity distribution. We call this the "three-component" proton model. Note that because we 115 do not include a dense, cold ion component, this model is less appropriate to represent 116 proton distributions in the plasmasphere, but is more relevant for protons in the outer 117 magnetosphere [Perraut et al., 1982; Meredith et al., 2008]. We define $n_o \equiv n_1 + n_2 - n_3$ and $n_o T_p \equiv n_1 T_1 + n_2 T_2 - n_3 T_3$. The electrons are described by a single Maxwellian 119 velocity distribution. The ring current observations and models cited above demonstrate a broad range of 121

parameters for unstable proton velocity ring distributions. The numerical algorithm of our dispersion solver uses an increasing number of Bessel functions to compute dispersion at increasing values of ω_r/Ω_p , so numerical convergence is improved by choosing plasma parameters which yield maximum growth at frequencies somewhat, but not substantially, greater than Ω_p . Thus we choose the following representative parameters: $v_A/c = 1.0 \times 10^{-3}$, $\tilde{\beta}_1 = 0.20$, $n_1/n_o = 0.650$, $n_2/n_o = 3.300$, $n_3/n_o = 2.95$, $T_{\parallel 2}/T_1 = 2$, $T_{\parallel 3}/T_1 = 1.4$, $T_e/T_1 = 0.01$, and $T_{\perp 2}/T_{\parallel 2} = T_{\perp 3}/T_{\parallel 3} = 2.0$ so that $T_{\parallel p}/T_1 = 3.12$.

Figure 1 illustrates the proton velocity distribution corresponding to these parame-129 ters. Here $\partial f_p(v_{\parallel},0)/\partial v_{\parallel}<0$ for all $v_{\parallel}>0$, whereas $\partial f_p(0,v_{\perp})/\partial v_{\perp}>0$ for a range of 130 suprathermal perpendicular speeds, indicating the potential for a proton-driven instabil-131 ity. The two-dimensional color representation in Figure 1c shows that, in this model and 132 for these parameters, $f_p(\mathbf{v})$ at $v_{\parallel} \neq 0$ is rather different from the velocity-ring distributions 133 modeled, for example, by Chen et al. [2010]. However, because the instability propagates 134 at $k_{\perp} >> k_{\parallel}$, it is the properties of $f_p(0, v_{\perp})$ which are the primary driver of the growing mode, so that we believe our 3-component model of the proton distribution provides a 136 qualitative, if not quantitative, representation of the properties of this instability.

The dispersion properties of the n=1 mode of the proton Bernstein instability in the three-component proton model are very similar to those of the two-Maxwellian model illustrated in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 of *Gary et al.* [2010] and are not shown here. As is well established, the instability propagates almost, but not exactly, perpendicular to the background magnetic field $(0 < k_{\parallel} << k_{\perp})$ and near successive harmonics of the proton cyclotron frequency.

Figure 2a displays the wavenumber dependence of γ for the unstable regimes of the first eight unstable Bernstein modes. The angles of propagation correspond to the relative maximum growth rates of the individual harmonics and are as stated in the caption; the frequencies corresponding to the successive growth rate peaks are illustrated in Figure 2c.

The perpendicular phase speeds of each unstable cyclotron mode are shown in Figure 2b with the dots representing the phase speed at maximum growth for that mode. For the $\tilde{\beta}_1 = 0.20$ used here, $v_1/v_A = \sqrt{0.10}$, so that the perpendicular phase speed at maximum growth of $\omega_r/k_{\perp}v_A \simeq 0.74$ is equivalent to $\omega_r/k_{\perp}v_1 \simeq 2.34$. Thus from Figure 1b, the

steep positive slope of the proton perpendicular velocity distribution corresponds to the perpendicular phase speed at maximum growth.

Figure 3 illustrates some linear properties at the relative maximum growth rates of the 154 cyclotron harmonic modes of this instability at $\omega_r \lesssim 10\Omega_p$ as functions of $\tilde{\beta}_1$ under the 155 condition that all other representative dimensionless parameters stated above are held 156 constant. At constant v_A/c , increases in $\tilde{\beta}_1$ correspond to increases in the temperature 157 of the core proton component. Figure 3a shows that the maximum growth rate of each 158 of these modes lies at $0.10 \leq \tilde{\beta}_1 \leq 0.15$. This is similar to the Gary et al. [2010] result 159 from the two-proton-component model which shows a maximum instability growth rate near $\tilde{\beta}_1 \simeq 0.30$. Figure 3b shows the angles of propagation at maximum growth of these 161 harmonics; so increasing $\tilde{\beta}_1$ leads to a monotonic decrease in θ for each mode. Again, this is the same trend as shown in Fig. 3c of Gary et al. [2010] with θ decreasing monotonically 163 as $\tilde{\beta}_1$ increases. Figure 3c shows that $\omega_r/k_{\perp}v_A$ is also a monotonic function of $\tilde{\beta}_1$, with 164 this dimensionless phase speed increasing as the core proton temperature increases. In contrast to the Gary et al. [2010] results of $\omega_r/k_{\perp}v_A \simeq 0.25$, here $\omega_r/k_{\perp}v_A \simeq 0.60$ near 166 maximum growth rates.

Linear dispersion theory not only provides a relationship between the complex frequency and the wavevector \mathbf{k} for a particular normal mode of the plasma, it also yields dimensionless ratios of quadratic combinations of the various fluctuating field components of that normal mode [e.g., Chapter 5 of *Gary*, 1993]. For the proton Bernstein instability and the range of parameters illustrated in Figure 3, magnetic fluctuations have both a transverse and a compressive component, with $|\delta B_{\perp}|^2 << |\delta B_{\perp \perp}|^2 \sim |\delta B_{\parallel}|^2$ at maximum

growth rate. The corresponding electric field fluctuations are predominantly electrostatic, with $|\delta E_{||}|^2 << |\delta E_{\perp\perp}|^2 << |\delta E_{\perp}|^2$.

For all values of the parameters considered here, $0.96 < |\delta E_{\perp}|^2 < 1.0$; we do not illustrate this result. However, Figure 4 shows two other linear theory quantities which display variations which appear to be characteristic of this instability. Figure 4a illustrates the magnetic compressibility C_{\parallel} [Equation (1)] which is a relatively insensitive function of the cyclotron harmonic number, and, as in the two-component model results of *Gary et al.* [2010], increases with increasing $\tilde{\beta}_1$. Figure 4b shows that, in our three-component proton model, the electric/magnetic field energy ratio [Equation (2)] increases with increasing mode frequency, but is a diminishing function of $\tilde{\beta}_1$; it also approximately satisfies $\sigma_{EE} \sim \omega_r^2$ at $\omega_r >> \Omega_p$.

Figure 5 shows the maximum growth rate and the corresponding electron Landau res-185 onance factor of the $\omega_r \simeq 6\Omega_p$ cyclotron mode of the proton Bernstein instability as 186 functions of T_e/T_1 . The γ_m/Ω_p is a decreasing function of the electron/thermal-proton temperature ratio, due to the increasing efficacy of the electron Landau resonance, as 188 indicated by the decreasing magnitude of ζ_e . This indicates that this instability is subject to strong electron Landau damping as the relative electron temperature increases. On 190 the other hand, in the nonresonant limit, the growth rate becomes relatively independent 191 of the electron temperature, suggesting that hybrid simulations, in which electrons are 192 represented as a fluid, may provide an appropriate representation of the nonlinear physics 193 of this instability as long as $T_e/T_1 \lesssim 0.10$.

3. Conclusions

We have carried out numerical solutions of the full kinetic linear dispersion equation 195 for the proton Bernstein instability driven by a proton velocity distribution $f_p(\mathbf{v})$ such 196 that $\partial f_p(v_\perp)/\partial v_\perp > 0$ at suprathermal values of v_\perp . We model the proton velocity 197 distribution by means of three components: a Maxwellian represents the relatively cool thermal component, and the difference of two hotter bi-Maxwellians with $T_{\perp j}/T_{\parallel j}$ > 199 1 represents the velocity-ring-like distributions sometimes observed in in the stormtime 200 magnetosphere. Our results are consistent with previous theoretical results; the instability 201 propagates almost perpendicular to \mathbf{B}_o with relative maxima near successive harmonics of the proton cyclotron frequency. The fluctuating electric fields are essentially electrostatic, 203 and the fluctuating magnetic fields have both compressive (δB_{\parallel}) and transverse $(\delta B_{\perp\perp})$ 204 components. The primary new results presented here are for scalings of the maximum 205 growth rate of the proton Bernstein instability driven by a suprathermal velocity ring 206 distribution. In our model the maximum growth rate is found in the range $0.10 < \tilde{\beta}_1 < 0.15$ and at perpendicular phase speeds $\omega_r/k_{\perp}v_A\simeq 0.6$. As $\tilde{\beta}_1$ increases, the angle of instability 208 propagation moves away from the direction perpendicular to the background magnetic field, and the magnetic compressibility increases. The maximum instability growth rate 210 is a monotonically decreasing function of the electron/thermal-proton temperature ratio. 211 The primary value of the results presented here are that they are exact; our calculations 212 represent full solutions of the kinetic linear theory dispersion equation, with no approxima-213 tions concerning the magnitudes of the dimensionless frequencies, wavevectors or plasma 214 parameters. The primary limitations of this work are two. First, our calculations strictly 215 apply only to homogeneous plasmas and should include consequences of propagation in

- the inhomogeneous geomagnetic field to increase their magnetospheric relevance. Second, although our model represents the positive slope of the $f_p(0, v_{\perp})$ which drives the proton Bernstein instability, it does not fully represent the $v_{\parallel} \neq 0$ properties of stormtime proton velocity distributions predicted by the RAM model as in *Chen et al.* [2010].
- Acknowledgments. This work was performed under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). It was supported primarily by the Defense Threat Reduction agency under the "Basic Research for Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)" Program, projects IACRO 10-4946I and IACRO 10-4284I. Further support has been provided by the Dynamic Radiation Environment Assimiliation Model (DREAM) Project at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

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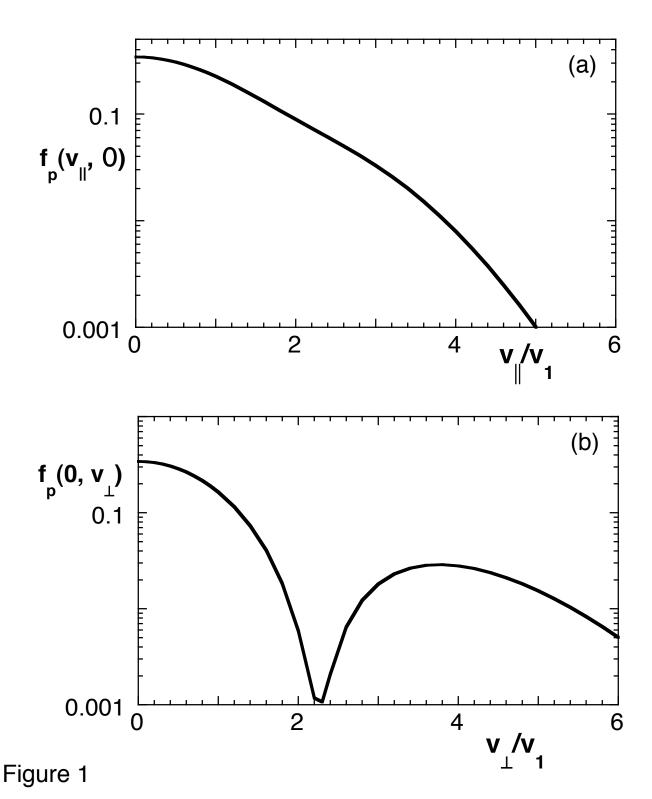
Figure 1. The proton velocity distribution in arbitrary units in the three-component model using the representative plasma parameters stated in Section 2. (a) The parallel velocity distribution $f_p(v_{\parallel}, 0)$, (b) the perpendicular velocity distribution $f_p(0, v_{\perp})$, and (c) the two-dimensional distribution $f_p(v_{\parallel}, v_{\perp})$.

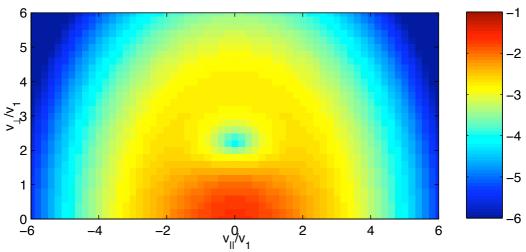
Figure 2. Linear theory properties of the first eight cyclotron modes of the proton Bernstein instability for the representative parameters stated in Section 2. (a) Growth rates of the modes as functions of the wavenumber. (b) Perpendicular phase speed $(\omega_r/k_{\perp}v_A)$ of the modes as functions of the wavenumber. The dots on each curve here correspond to the wavenumber of maximum growth for each cyclotron mode. (c) Growth rates of the modes as functions of the real frequency. Here each curve is plotted for a fixed value of θ corresponding to the maximum growth rate of that cyclotron mode. These angles of propagation are, starting with the $\omega_r \simeq 3\Omega_p$ mode, $\theta = 81.40^o$, 83.25^o , 84.45^o , 85.30^o , 85.90^o , 86.35^o , 86.75^o , and 87.00^o .

Figure 3. Linear theory properties of the first eight cyclotron modes of the proton Bernstein instability as functions of the real frequency ω_r . Here each symbol corresponds to a maximum growth rate of the individual cylotron harmonic modes illustrated in Figure 2 at six different values of $\tilde{\beta}_1$ as labeled in panel (a); all other parameters have the representative values stated in Section 2. (a) Maximum growth rate, (b) propagation angle at maximum growth rate, and (c) dimensionless perpendicular phase speed $\omega_r/k_{\perp}v_A$.

Figure 4. Linear theory properties of the first eight cyclotron modes of the proton Bernstein instability as functions of the real frequency ω_r . Here each symbol corresponds to a maximum growth rate of the individual cylotron harmonic modes illustrated in Figure 2 at six different values of $\tilde{\beta}_1$ as labeled in panel (a); all other parameters have the representative values stated in Section 2. (a) Magnetic compressibility C_{\parallel} and (b) the electric/magnetic field energy ratio σ_{EE} .

Figure 5. The maximum growth rate (solid line) and corresponding electron Landau resonance factor $\zeta_e \equiv \omega_r/\sqrt{2}k_{\parallel}v_e$ (dashed line) of the $\omega_r \simeq 6\Omega_p$ cyclotron mode of the proton Bernstein instability as functions of T_e/T_1 . All other parameters have the representative values stated in Section 2. The wave parameters corresponding to this maximum growth are $kv_1/\Omega_p \simeq 2.57$, $\theta \simeq 85.4^o$, and $\omega_r/\Omega_p \simeq 5.95$ and are relatively independent of T_e/T_1 here.





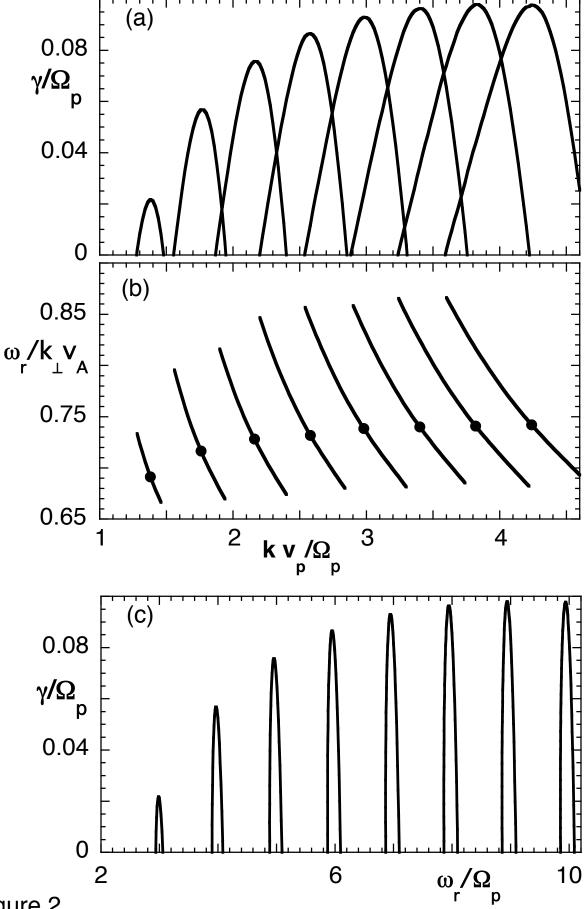


Figure 2

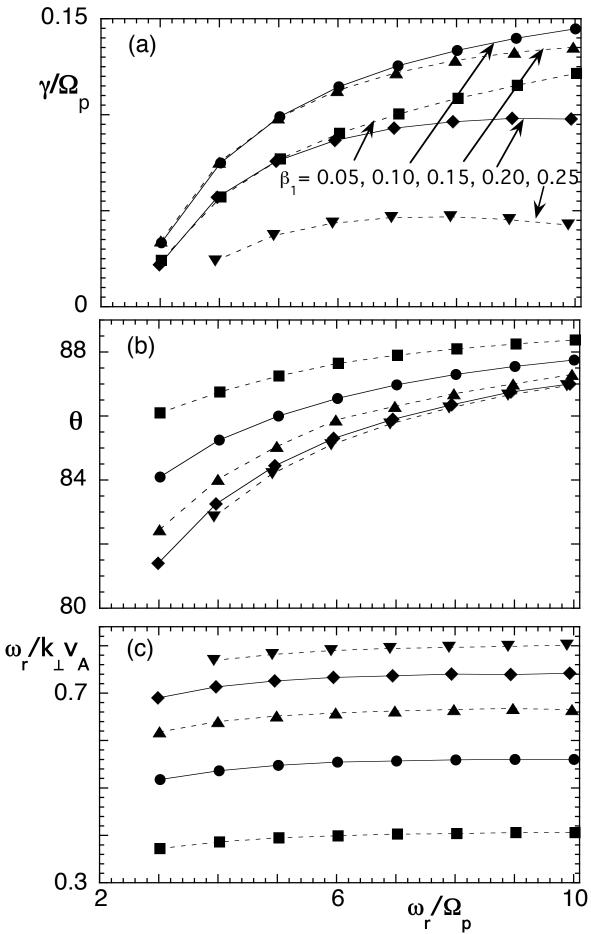


Figure 3

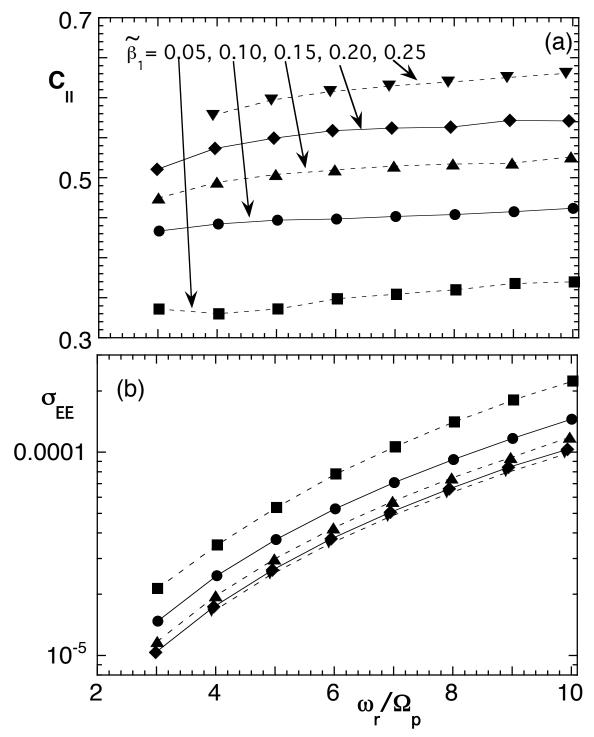


Figure 4

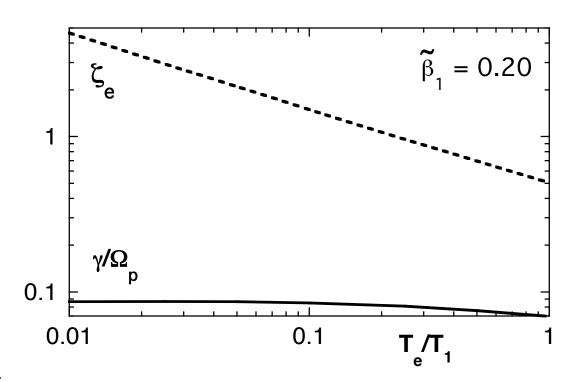


Figure 5